Keeping in Touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

March 1993

UFMCC Focuses on Christian Social Action

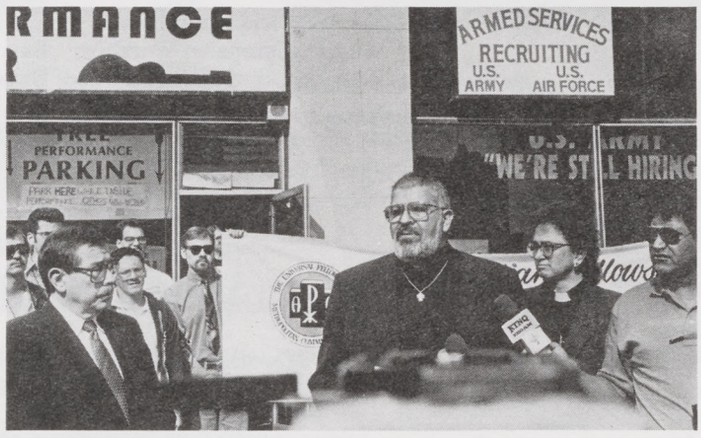
By Challenging The Military

UFMCC supports the recent actions of U.S. President Bill Clinton to study and then eliminate discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the military, said Rev. Troy Perry, UFMCC founder and moderator.

UFMCC received major national and international news coverage for its justice stand on the role of gays and lesbians in the military, including efforts to have Rev. Dusty Pruitt recognized as a military chaplain. A UFMCC press conference held Jan. 29 in front of the Armed Forces Recruitment Center in Hollywood, CA, was broadcast by at least 10 local and national television networks, as well as by Eco, an international Spanish language news network. Countless newspapers, including *The New York Times*, carried articles on UFMCC's position.

"I thank God the day is coming when openly gay and lesbian chaplains are available to meet the spiritual needs of America's soldiers," Rev. Perry said. He is a Vietnam-era veteran who served in the U.S. Army as a cryptographer with top-secret clearance and was openly gay in his unit.

At the press conference, Rev. Perry explained that UFMCC supports President Clinton's decision to issue an Executive Order on July 13 banning discrimination based on sexual orientation in the military.



Speaking at UFMCC's press conference were, from left, Rev. David Farrell, Rev. Elder Troy Perry and Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson.

Other speakers at the press conference were Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, pastor of MCC Los Angeles, and Rev. David Farrell, pastor of MCC San Diego, CA.

Rev. Perry also announced a series of actions intended to mobilize UFMCC during what he termed, "a pivotal, historical point in our struggle for civil rights." These actions include resubmitting UFMCC's chaplaincy request; arranging a meeting with President Clinton; a Fellowship-wide call for action, including a special UFMCC strategy session in Dallas, TX; and a special request to MCCers with past, present or future military connections.

(see Military, page 4)

By Marching On Washington

Excitement is building for the March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation on April 25.

"Interest in the March has exploded," said Rev. Troy Perry, UFMCC founder and moderator. "At the Fellowship offices, we have received more than 100 calls just about The Wedding."

UFMCC is sponsoring The Wedding, a giant ceremony of commitment for lesbian, gay and bi couples to be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, April 24, in front of the Internal Revenue Service Building on Constitution Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets NW. A brochure about The Wedding is enclosed in this issue of *Keeping in Touch*.

Guest speakers at The Wedding will include Mr. Craig Dean and Mr. Patrick Gill.

(see March, page 3)

UFMCC Leaders Invited to Strategize

All UFMCC leaders, clergy and lay, are invited to attend a strategy session from 11 a.m. Thursday, March 25, to noon Saturday, March 27 at Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas, TX.

Mr. David Mixner, an openly gay senior advisor to President Bill Clinton and the Clinton-Gore campaign, will be guest speaker. Mr. Mixner is a prominent member of the Democratic National Committee, the Congressional Action Fund, the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund and many other public interest causes.

"I believe that the leadership in our denomination must hold a meeting to strategize on how to end discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the military, as well as other fights we face for gay and lesbian civil rights," said Rev. Troy Perry, UFMCC founder and moderator.

Conference rates of $49 per night are available at the Executive Ramada Inn for all who make reservations under "UFMCC Leadership Conference" before March 10. To reserve a room, call the hotel at (214) 357-5601. Cathedral of Hope MCC can also house a limited number of people in members' homes; for reservations, call (214) 351-1901. ❐

General Conference Planned For All Nations

A diverse, spirit-filled series of worship services are planned for General Conference XVI July 18-25 in Phoenix, AZ.

Preachers will include all seven UFMCC elders, plus clergy and lay leaders throughout the world.

Other major speakers just announced are Rev. Cecil Williams, pastor of Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco, CA; Rev. John McNeill, Catholic priest and author of *Taking a Chance on God* and numerous other books; and Dr. Kenneth Smith, president, Chicago Theological Seminary. They join the previously announced headline speakers: Ms. Rebeca Sevilla Zevallos of Lima, Peru, Co-General Secretary of the International Lesbian and Gay Association; and Rev. Marie Fortune, founder and executive director of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence.

Already 220 people have preregistered for General Conference, which promises to be UFMCC's largest Conference ever. Many groups have already reserved booths at the conference's General Store, so that only five booths remain available as of Feb. 16.

The early registration of $193 for people in the US and Canada has been extended to March 22. Those postmarked March 23 to June 15 are $233, and onsite will be $255. Early registration discounts for conference goers from outside the US must be postmarked on or before June 15 to receive the discounted fee of $130 for the whole conference or $100 for the final weekend. ❐

Conference Worship Schedule

Sunday, July 18	Opening Service:	Rev. Elder Willem Hein
Monday, July 19	Memorial Service:	Rev. Elder Jean White
Tuesday, July 20	Morning Worship:	Elder Larry Rodriguez
	Evening Worship:	Rev. Elder Don Eastman
Wednesday, July 21	Morning Worship:	Rev. Fred Williams, pastor King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg, FL
	World Church Extension Worship:	Rev. Sylvanus Maduka, Extension Coordinator, Nigeria; and Ms. Caroline Blanco, Centre de l'Esprit Liberateur, Paris, France
Thursday, July 22	Morning Worship:	Ms. Marion Briggs, Lay Rep to Faith, Fellowship & Order, Western Canadian District
	Evening Worship:	Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson
Friday, July 23	Morning Worship:	Mr. Nathan Meckley, MCC Los Angeles, CA
	Ordination Service:	Rev. Elder Freda Smith
Saturday, July 24	Human Rights Service:	Rev. Herbert Evans, MCC of Philadelphia, PA
Sunday, July 25	Closing Service:	Rev. Elder Troy Perry

Apply Now For International Travel Funds

For the first time this year, a travel pool is available to help clergy and lay delegates from outside the United States and Canada attend General Conference.

Based on the number of applicants, up to 100% of travel expenses may be reimbursed for individuals traveling from outside North America. Those eligible for funding include World Church Extension (WCE) leadership such as pastoral leaders and student clergy, as well as pastors and clergy and lay delegates.

The deadline for travel pool applications has been extended to April 1.

The travel pool was created by a motion at General Conference XV that called for a $25 surcharge on all General Conference registrations to establish this fund. After a surcharge of 15% for administrative costs, the money in the travel pool will be divided between WCE (40%), European North Sea District (up to 30%) and Australian District (up to 30%).

For more information write UFMCC, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd. #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100.❐

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

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Send address changes, news and ideas to: *Keeping in Touch*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd, #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100.

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Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, Moderator
Mr. Ravi Verma, Director of Administration
Rev. Kittredge Cherry, Editor

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Ms. Nancy Fackrell, Typesetting

UFMCC Attends Europe Meeting

Rev. Ian Westby, National Ecumenical Officer for the United Kingdom, attended the Conference of European Churches in Prague, Czechoslovakia in September 1992. This marked UFMCC's first official participation in the regional ecumenical organization that links some 120 churches in all the countries of Europe.

Photo by Rev. Ian Westby

"You Are The Folks To Count On"

A 29-year-old gay man in Poland recently wrote to *Keeping in Touch* to tell us about the importance of this newsletter in his spiritual life. We share an excerpt from his letter here:

"In the first few lines of my letter, I would like to thank you that you remember me, and still I receive *Keeping in Touch* . It is an evidence that you are the folks to count on in difficult life situations. I remember the times when everybody had its own Easter and I at that time was spiritually there with you reading *Keeping in Touch* and the loneliness wasn't so painful." ❐

UFMCC Joins Interfaith Impact

UFMCC was unanimously received as a national member organization in Interfaith Impact for Justice and Peace Feb. 12.

Based in Washington, DC, Interfaith Impact serves as the collective voice of the religious community on national public policy questions.

Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, UFMCC chief ecumenical officer, noted that membership in Interfaith Impact is especially important in light of the November vote by the National Council of Churches (NCC) to deny observer status to UFMCC. "As members of Interfaith Impact, we will be able to participate in public policy decisions and build relationships with other communities of faith in much the same way that we had hoped to do as members of the NCC," she said. "In fact, the NCC is also a member of Interfaith Impact!"

Rev. Elder Don Eastman added, "The people of UFMCC have some clear ideas and strong values on various social justice issues. These values and ideas need to influence our society. Our commitment to social action requires intentional structural and programmatic response at the denominational level."

Rev. Troy Perry, UFMCC founder and moderator, pointed out that Interfaith Impact fits well with UFMCC's social action mission. "By joining Interfaith Impact, UFMCC will be more effective in bringing Christian social action to the world," he said.

Mr. James Bell, executive director of Interfaith Impact, will speak during General Conference at a variety of events, including the Ecumenical Breakfast on Friday, July 23. ❐

Samaritan Reschedules

Samaritan College announced a revised schedule for its Orientation to MCC Pastoring program.

Track I, Section I, will be held May 31 to June 12. Track I, Section 2 will be held June 14-26. Track II will be held June 28 to July 10. Orientation will be held at American University in Washington, DC. ❐

MCC Key West Forms Clergy Group

MCC Key West, FL, was denied membership in the local ministerial association — so they started their own group, which is now flourishing.

"We didn't meet the moral standard that they came up with because we're queers," explained Rev. Steve Torrence, pastor of MCC Key West. "They didn't let the Jewish rabbi in, either, because he wasn't Christian."

The recent hiring of Rev. Julia Seward enabled MCC Key West to respond by forming a new ministerial association, Rev. Torrence said. "It was easy," he said. "We began by contacting the local clergy who weren't active in the other group because we weren't allowed in," he said. Since then, some members of the older ministerial association have switched membership to the new organization.

The new group includes ministers from UFMCC, Lutheran, Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, United Church of Christ traditions, as well as a Navy chaplain. The new association is called the Key West Interfaith Council, or KWIC. "We're the quick and they're the dead!" Rev. Torrence joked. ❐

March

(continued from page 1)

They are challenging the marriage laws of the District of Columbia by suing to receive a marriage license application.

Many UFMCC members are planning to attend the March. For example, Holy Cross MCC, Pensacola, FL, is paying to send its entire board of directors to the March.

The nationwide search continues for the lesbian, gay and bisexual couples that have been together the longest. UFMCC will fly these three couples to the March and introduce them at The Wedding. "We have already found a gay male couple that has been together for 50 years and a lesbian couple with a 42-year relationship," Rev. Perry said.

For more information about UFMCC events at the March on Washington, please see pages 4 and 6. ❐

In Washington, D.C.
Plan to Attend

A Reception in Honor of U.S. Congressional Leaders

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Saturday, April 24, 1993
in the beautiful new home of
Metropolitan Community Church
474 Ridge Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Wine, punch, fruit and cheeses served. Advance ticket purchase required;
$20.00 per person (Proceeds benefit the UFMCC AIDS Ministry and MCC Washington, D.C.)

Please send me _____ ticket(s) at $20.00 each for the Congressional Reception in Washington, D.C.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Please make check payable to UFMCC and mail to:

UFMCC, Suite 304
5300 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90029

Military *(continued from page 1)*

Chaplaincy Request

UFMCC again asked the Pentagon to allow its ministers to serve as military chaplains. UFMCC resubmitted its request to be recognized as an ecclesiastical endorsing agency and reaffirmed Rev. Pruitt as its candidate.

"We confront this unjust policy as a matter of religious freedom," Rev. Elder Don Eastman said in his Jan. 25 letter asking for UFMCC's application to be reconsidered. The Armed Forces Chaplains Board responded with a Feb. 2 letter asking UFMCC to wait and resubmit its application after President Clinton issues the Executive Order.

Rev. Pruitt has received widespread coverage in the national news media and is scheduled to appear on "The Sally Jesse Rafael Show."

In addition, UFMCC has requested a meeting with Secretary of Defense Les Aspin and other Defense Department officials to discuss the UFMCC chaplaincy.

Meeting with President Clinton

Rev. Perry phoned Rev. Paul Sherry, president of the 1.6 million-member United Church of Christ, to discuss strategy on the role of lesbians and gays in the military. They agreed to request a meeting with President Clinton and the heads of other supportive denominations.

Call for Action

Rev. Perry issued a call for action, urging every UFMCC member to do their part to assure an end to discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the military. Specifically, he asked all UFMCC members to:

▼ Fast and pray on the 13th of every month until President Clinton signs the Executive Order.

▼ Phone or write President Clinton and their own Senators and Congresspersons to express their views. President Clinton may be reached at (202) 456-1111.

Military Chaplains Sought

"UFMCC needs a few good soldiers," Rev. Perry said. Anyone interested in becoming a UFMCC military chaplain is invited to send their resume to Rev. Perry at UFMCC, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029. The resumes will be reviewed for future submission to the U.S. Defense Department.

To MCCers in the Military

Air Force Major Pat Baillie of Diablo Valley MCC, Concord, CA, suggests one way that MCC members in the military can take a justice stand. "Four years ago I 'officially' changed my military records to show my religious preference as UFMCC," Major Baillie wrote. "Separation of church and state has protected me in 2-1/2 years under the threat of investigation." ❐

Around The Fellowship

Praises

Nearly 50 people attended the first worship service of **Grace Chapel MCC**, Santa Barbara, CA, pastored by **Rev. Stephen Moore**, on Jan. 25.

The 20th anniversary of the founding of the first UFMCC church in Canada, **MCC Toronto**, will be held Feb. 27-28. Founder **Bob Wolf** will be honored.

Rev. Steve Torrence, pastor of **MCC Key West**, FL, recently received the 1992 Prevention Award for contribution of exceptional merit to Florida's children and their parents in Dade and Monroe Counties. The award was presented by the Florida State Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse. Rev. Torrence was also appointed recently to the State Health and Human Services Board for his region; he is the only openly gay person on any such board in Florida.

Revs. LaPaula Turner and **Herbert Evans** served as co-chairs of the spirituality track at the Sixth Annual National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Conference and Institutes Feb. 11-15 in Long Beach, CA.

MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX, has purchased two additional buildings next to its current facility to provide more parking space and room for its expanding ministries.

Rev. Maggie Tanis, pastor of **Ke Anuenue O Ke Aloha MCC**, Honolulu, HI, was elected unanimously to a one-year term on the Hawaii Council of Churches' Board of Directors Feb. 21. Her election marks the first time a UFMCC representative has served on the board of a state council of churches. **Rev. Tom Bigelow**, Northwest District Coordinator, and many MCC members attended the meeting where Rev. Tanis was elected. ❐

Correction

Rev. John Brossard is clergy on staff at MCC Lake Charles, LA. His church affiliation was incorrectly listed in the January issue of *Keeping in Touch*. ❐

Transitions

MCC of Philadelphia, PA, voted to call **Rev. Herbert Evans** as pastor, Jan. 27.

Rev. Lee Campbell will be installed as pastor of **Christ the Redeemer MCC**, Evanston, IL, March 7.

Rev. Lew Broyles has become pastor of **New Hope MCC**, Milwaukee, WI.

Rev. Julia Seward was hired as associate pastor of **MCC Key West**, FL.

Rev. Randy Votsch has been called to pastor **MCC Charlotte**, NC. Rev. Votsch, who is in the process of transferring his clergy credentials to UFMCC, has been serving in a pastoral capacity there for a year.

MCC Asheville, NC, called **Rev. Bob Galloway** as interim pastor.

The following churches have new pastoral leadership: **MCC Dayton Parish**, Dayton, OH, **Ms. Raeanna Biddle**; **Jesus MCC**, Indianapolis, IN, **Ms. Deb Dysert**; and **Tri-State MCC**, Evansville, IN, **Ms. Cathy Porter** and **Ms. Cyndi Wright**. ❐

Prayers

Rev. Nancy Brown, pastor of **Hickory MCC**, Hickory, NC, and her spouse **Debbie**, welcome prayers for their son Jeffrey, who was hospitalized recently due to illness.

Rev. Carol Couch, clergy on staff at **MCC Chattanooga**, TN, is facing surgery.

The following clergy have been hospitalized recently with HIV-related health concerns: **Rev. Dan Mahoney** and **Rev. Thomas Walker** of **MCC Los Angeles**, CA; and **Rev. Brian Hanlon** of **MCC Omaha**, NE. ❐

Top 20 Tithes - Jan. 1993

1.	Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas, TX	US $	5,333.01
2.	Church/Holy Spirit MCC, Ft. Lauderdale, FL		3,334.08
3.	MCC Washington, Washington, DC		3,267.55
4.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX		2,541.46
5.	MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada	CAN$	2,120.55
6.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		1,882.73
7.	St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL		1,750.90
8.	MCC San Francisco, San Francisco, CA		1,460.76
9.	MCC Los Angeles, Culver City, CA		1,405.00
10.	King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg, FL		1,357.17
11.	Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL		1,254.05
12.	River City MCC, Sacramento, CA		1,118.76
13.	Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL		1,078.40
14.	Harvest MCC, Denton, TX		942.55
15.	MCC New York, New York, NY		921.11
16.	MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM		819.88
17.	Agape' MCC, Ft. Worth, TX		770.74
18.	Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX		724.61
19.	MCC of Greater St. Louis, St. Louis, MO		708.51
20.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		706.94

{These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.}

Top 20 Per Capita - Jan. 1993

1.	Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX	US $	42.62
2.	Calvary MCC, Redwood City, CA		36.38
3.	MCC Silverlake, Los Angeles, CA		33.12
4.	New Life MCC, Berkeley, CA		26.20
5.	Faith Eternal MCC, Springfield, IL		23.90
6.	MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA		22.50
7.	MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM		22.28
8.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		21.95
9.	MCC Johnson County, Lenexa, KS		21.72
10.	MCC of the Disciples, Washington, DC		21.68
11.	Oasis MCC, Phoenix, AZ		21.12
12.	Russian River MCC, Guerneville, CA		20.65
13.	Church With A Vision MCC, Longview, TX		20.49
14.	Harvest MCC, Denton, TX		20.36
15.	Christ Chapel MCC, Santa Ana, CA		19.61
16.	MCC of the Living Spring, Eureka Springs, AR		18.74
17.	Open Door MCC, Boyds, MD		18.26
18.	MCC Hickory, Hickory, NC		18.19
19.	Ke Anuenue MCC, Honolulu, HI		17.65
20.	Golden Gate MCC, San Francisco, CA		17.56

{These figures reflect average individual weekly offerings to the local church.}

Rev. Perry Goes to Inauguration

UFMCC was represented by Rev. Troy Perry, founder and moderator, at the Inauguration of U.S. President Bill Clinton Jan. 20.

"The power of being there was unbelievable," Rev. Perry said. "Everyone in attendance was there because they believed in the need for change. I believe with all my heart that what many of us have worked for all of our lives is about to come to fruition."

He was especially impressed when, 37 minutes after the Inaugural began, the new president mentioned "AIDS." Within 49 minutes, the word "gay" joined the vocabulary of the Inauguration in a poem by Ms. Maya Angelou.

"You could hear all the gay and lesbian people throughout the crowd draw their breath," he recalled.

Another highlight of the Inauguration was the reception sponsored by the Victory Fund to honor senior presidential advisor, David Mixner. Mr. Mixner mentioned UFMCC in his address to a crowd of 2,500. ❐

***Compiling figures for the Fellowship budget** is keeping Mr. David Martin busy this month in preparation for the General Council meeting March 11-16. Mr. Martin, UFMCC data information services coordinator, is responsible for maintaining computer records for the general ledger, Church Services, and World Church Extension donations. He has worked at the Fellowship offices since 1990.*

Classifieds

TO PLACE YOUR AD

Cost is $15 for the first 25 words or less. Additional words are 70 cents per word. Numbers and abbreviations count as words. All classifieds must be prepaid in U.S. funds. All copy for *Keeping in Touch* Classified Advertising is subject to the approval of the Editorial Board. Appearance of advertising does not imply, nor does it constitute, endorsement by UFMCC. Mail ads to: Keeping in Touch Classifieds, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

SALVATION SCRIPTURE, and Sexuality by Bishop Mark Shirilau clearly demonstrates that God loves everyone, regardless of sexuality. $4.00 includes tax, postage. Healing Spirit Press, P.O. Box 94, Villa Grande, CA 95486.

Books affirming our lifestyle. In God's Image (Episcopal), Out of the Bishop's Closet (Mormon). For free catalog; Alamo Square Press, P.O. Box 14543, San Francisco, CA 94114.

EVENTS

Mark your calendars now! MCC Los Angeles celebrates the 25th anniversary of its founding on Oct. 1-3.

MAIL ORDER

Live Opera Performances on Audio/Video cassette. Incredible selection since 1930's-worldwide. Huge free computerized catalog. Live Opera, Box 3141, Steinway Station, L.I.C., NY 11103.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Sunrise MCC of the Hi Desert, Lancaster, CA, is seeking a pastor. Please contact P.O. Box 886, Lancaster, CA 93584.

MCC Detroit, MI, is seeking a pastor. Please write to: Pastoral Search Committee, MCC Detroit, 18000 Glendale, Roseville, MI 48066.

Pikes Peak MCC, Colorado Springs, CO is seeking a full-time pastor beginning Summer 1993. Please send a resume and letter of intent to PPMCC Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Jan Michel, P.O. Box 6591, Colo Springs, CO 80934-6591.

Schedule of UFMCC Events at The March on Washington

Saturday, April 24

11 a.m.	"The Wedding." In front of the IRS Building on Constitution Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets, NW. Reception immediately following the Wedding -
until 3:30 p.m.	Reception for Wedding-Goers at Tracks, 1111 First Street, SE.
5-7 p.m.	Reception for Dianne Feinstein and other political leaders at MCC Washington, DC, 474 Ridge Street, NW.

Sunday, April 25

8:30 a.m.	Communion Service at the Lincoln Memorial.
12 Noon	THE MARCH
7:30 p.m.	Sunday worship service at MCC Washington, DC, 474 Ridge Street, NW.

New brochure available

Our Story Too:

Lesbians and Gay Men in the Bible

A bold, proactive reading of The Bible is offered in this new UFMCC brochure, the third in a series on Christianity and homosexuality. *Our Story Too* is written by Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, pastor of MCC Los Angeles, CA.

(A sample brochure is enclosed)